



New Jersey Department of Children and Families Policy Manual

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I. **PURPOSE**

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is committed to working with its employees to maintain a work environment free from violence, threats of violence, intimidation, and other disruptive behavior. Such behavior can include oral or written statements, gestures, or expressions that communicate a direct or indirect threat of physical harm.

This policy addresses violent acts by employees and describes procedures to be followed for the prevention of, and response to, these acts.

II. **SCOPE**

This policy applies Department-wide.

III. **LEGAL AUTHORITY**

New Jersey State Executive Order No. 49, April 17, 1996

IV. **DEFINITIONS**

The following terms when used in this Policy, have the meanings indicated:

Intimidation means behavior or communication intended to intimidate, menace, or frighten another person.

Physical assault is unwanted or hostile physical contact including, but not limited to, fighting, hitting, shoving, or throwing objects.

Property damage means damage to property owned or used by the State, its employees, clients, or visitors.

Threats or threatening behavior means the overt expression, verbal or nonverbal, of intent to cause physical harm. It is intended to instill fear in another person. A threat can be considered direct or indirect.

Workplace violence includes, but is not limited to, physical assault, verbal or mental abuse, inappropriate physical contact, fighting, threatening behavior, intimidation, or willful property damage.

V. POLICY

It is the policy of the DCF that treats any threatening behavior, intimidation, physical acts of violence, and intentional property damage committed either on the property of the Department or while in the performance of work duties outside the Department's premises will not be tolerated. The Department will respond to all acts of workplace violence which are brought to the attention of management.

VI. TYPES OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE AND PENALTIES

An employee, who does not adhere to the Workplace Violence Policy, may be subject to disciplinary action.

Administrative Order No. 4:08 provides charges and penalties for the following types of infractions:

- Physical, or mental abuse of an employee;
- Verbal abuse of an employee;
- Inappropriate physical contact;
- Mistreatment of an employee;
- Fighting or creating a disturbance on State property;
- Willful damage to State property or property of an employee, and
- Threatening, intimidating, coercing, or interfering with fellow employees.

VII. PROCEDURES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Employees must adhere to this Policy to ensure a safe working environment. Managers and supervisors must enforce this Policy fairly and uniformly. Prompt and accurate reporting of all violent incidents is required whether physical injury to an employee has occurred or not.

- A. Any employee who becomes aware of an act of violence shall immediately report it to his/her supervisor or the Office of Employee Relations (OER). If the act appears to represent an immediate threat of harm to any individual, it should be reported immediately to law enforcement authorities.

- B. Any supervisor who becomes aware of an act of violence shall immediately report it to OER. If the act appears to represent an immediate threat of harm to any individual, it should be reported immediately to law enforcement authorities.
- C. As soon as is reasonably possible, the supervisor and/or employee should fully document the incident by completing the Violence in the Workplace Incident Report Form (Attachment 1) and filing it with OER. The Form may be faxed to OER to (609) 984-4736 or submitted by mail to the Department of Children Families, Office of Employee Relations, 50 East State St. – 4th Floor, P.O. Box 717, Trenton, NJ 08625-0717.
- D. The Workplace Violence Coordinator for OER will review all reports of workplace violence and make a determination if the incident meets the criteria for further involvement by OER. If it is determined that the incident meets the workplace violence criteria, the Workplace Violence Coordinator will commence an investigation that will include interviewing all parties involved in the incident. At the conclusion of the investigation, OER will advise all parties as to whether or not the matter constitutes a violation of the Workplace Violence Policy. OER will also provide recommendations to management, if warranted.

VIII. TRAINING

DCF recognizes the importance of training its employees on workplace violence. Training is designed to increase awareness, and provide recommendations for prevention, action, and response to workplace violence and the policy and procedures that are in place to ensure the safety of all employees. All employees receive Workplace Violence Policy Training as a component of the Orientation training for new employees.

Date

Eileen M. Crummy
Acting Commissioner

Attachments:

1. [Workplace Violence Incident Report Form \(Attachment 1\)](#)